

Daryl Hinman

The Mt. Valley

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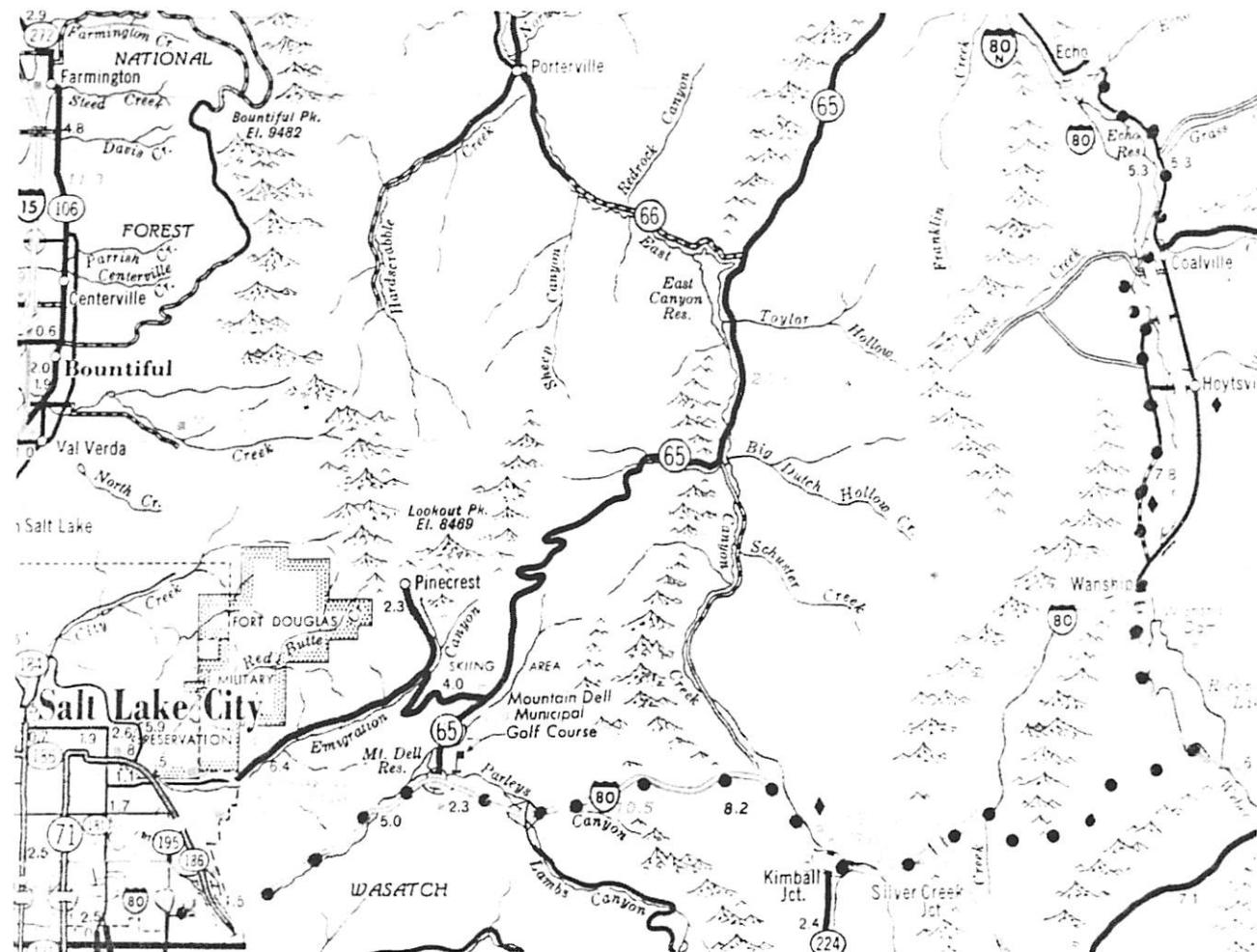


The PIONEER

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THE GOLDEN ROAD

from Echo Canyon to the new headquarters, Sons of Utah Pioneers
(The road is shown by dots. Diamonds indicate historic markers and places)

See page 11 for text.

THE CITY NAMED HEBER AND THE MOUNTAIN

The two black-robed Franciscan padres halted their trail-weary and travel-stained column at the grassy bank of the rushing stream. The morning sun was only two hands off the eastern horizon and dead ahead, clear and crisp and deceitfully close in the rarefied altitude of the western horizon was The Mountain.

Silvestre Velez de Escalante and Francisco Atanasio Dominguez had, months before, set out from Sante Fe with a modest military escort in a great Spanish effort to explore and establish new missions in the vast unknown western interior.

The year was 1776.

The Mountain seemingly stretched its lofty summit from both north to south horizons. With the early-morning sun warm on their black-robed backs; the padres stood in awesome respect at it's majesty. In months of blazing trails they had become somewhat inured to lofty peaks and primeval landscapes, but this magnificent mountain held them transfixed.

Its uppermost escarpment was girded by a sparkling glacier backdropped by a drifting white cloud and the matchless blue of a western sky. The padres were entranced. Reluctantly, they moved on toward The Mountain. Father Escalante had, in his brief encounter with the wandering Indians, heard of a strange Indian legend of a sleeping Indian Maiden—he was certain he had seen The Mountain.

The Mountain and the broad expanse of the valley to the east would sleep for another eight decades. In 1825, Etienne Provost, a French Mountain Man and trapper, had reaped a harvest of beaver plewes and had left his name on a river and later the settlement of "Provo".

1851 Several millhands from the Big Cottonwood Canyon sawmill, having Sunday off, hiked eastward, topped the Wasatch range and viewed, probably for the first time by man, the mile-high valley with the thought of settlement. The year was 1857. The trappers and mountain men had given little encouragement by reporting killing frost in any of the 12 months.

By the spring of 1858 Provo cattlemen had moved their range stock to summer in the southern end of the valley.

The spring and summer of 1858 brought several restless frontiersmen attracted by the lush green of the meadow lands and the pristine beauty of the rolling highlands. In July of 1858 the first survey was made for the townsite, J. W. Snow, the county surveyor at Provo, laid out 20-acre tracts just north of present day Heber City. During the late summer and early fall, the cattlemen scythed, cradled and stacked a winter's supply of hay from the sub-irrigated bottom lands.

An early explorer, William Gardner, had seen the need of some sort of a road connecting the valley through Provo canyon. In 1855 the Territorial Legislature enacted a measure, ambitiously empowering William Wall, Thomas S. Williams, Aaron Johnson and Evan M. Green to "construct a road from the mouth of Provo Canyon in Utah County to the Kamas prairie".

The coming of Alfred Cumming as Territorial Governor in 1857, escorted by General Albert Sidney Johnson and his Federal troops, understandably turned the thoughts and efforts of these settlers to other less constructive endeavors.

By the middle of 1858 the "Mormon War" had subsided just a bit and Gen. Johnson's troops were apparently peacefully garrisoned at Camp Floyd near Utah Lake. The pressing need of a road again presented itself. At a bowery meeting at Provo on June 6, 1858 Church President Brigham Young, leaving no possibility of misunderstanding stated, "A road up Provo Kanyon is much-needed and we want 10 or 20 companies of laborers to go on it forthwith in order to finish it in about 15 days so that you can go into the valleys of the Weber where there is plenty of timber...we shall need about 500 laborers."

The Provo Kanyon Company was formed by the next evening, and the 500 laborers went on it forthwith. W. G. Mills was appointed Project Clerk and Feramorz Little as Project

Superintendent. Engineer Henry Grow laid out the grades and route. Engineer Grow was to later gain some prominence for his part in the construction of the Salt Lake Tabernacle.

The Provo River was first bridged near the mouth of the canyon in October — the 15-day completion schedule was apparently somewhat optimistic.

The Oct. 13, 1858 issue of the Deseret News described the bridge as "...substantially and neatly made and calculated to be of service for many years to the inhabitants of Utah County". The road was completed 'before the snows fell'.

All through the long winter of 1858-59 the 11 pioneer families of Utah Valley planned and prepared to once again pioneer new homes in the high valley then called Provo Valley or soon to be known as Heber Valley.

Spring came late in 1859 and it was late April before the 11 men with three wagons and oxen could leave Provo. The wagons carried implements, farm tools and equipment and high hopes of new homes in a new frontier.

The 11 families had agreed to remain behind until cabins could be
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CITY NAMED HEBER

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constructed. The sun had not yet topped 'The Mountain' when the venturesome group urged their little train eastward upslope following the trace of the road they had "completed" the previous fall. The Wasatch winter had all but erased their back-breaking efforts of a few months earlier. The 11 frontiersmen were James Carlile, George Carlile, William Giles Jr., William Carpenter, Jesse Bond, Henry Chatwin, John Carlile, John Jordan, Charles N. Carroll, Thomas Rasband and John Crook.

We hear from John Crook frequently during the subsequent years. Apparently Crook was a dedicated recorder of those eventful days. His chronicle reads "April 30, 1859, we camped at a snowslide in Provo Canyon that night. The next morning we pulled our wagons to pieces and carried them to the top of the snowslide which was about a quarter of a mile wide.

We thought we were the first settlers to arrive in the valley that spring, but when we reached the present site of Heber we saw two teams plowing north of us which proved to be William Davidson with two yoke of oxen and Robert Broadhead and James Davis with a similar outfit between them. We found that William Davidson had his family here, which I believe was the first family in the valley".

After a brief salutation the 11 moved on to a bright spring flowing about one mile north of the present Heber City. Crook notes it as being "the best land in the valley". Since they were in the majority and since most of the 11 were of British decent they named the spring "London"; they made their camp here and the name remains as London Spring. Losing no time, each man selected his allotment of land and quickly began to clear and prepare to plant.

In June 1859, the deputy county surveyor of Utah County, Jesse Fuller, laid out the town of London. The Sturdy log cabins were constructed from green cottonwood logs hauled from the riverbottoms and arranged in a compact rectangle leaving only space between each cabin for a guarded access to the inner-court.

With the seed in the ground and the new homes in readiness, the little party of men again made the three-day journey to Provo to unite and bring their families to the new land. That first growing season yielded nearly one thousand bushels of grain — a first rate start.

With a fair harvest of hay and grain there were now 18 families determined to brave the long Wasatch winter. Some less determined were to return to Provo, preferring the amenities of "the city". The first birth recorded among the colonizers occurred in November—a daughter of William Davidson and his wife Ellen. Appropriately the little girl was named Timpanogos — the Indian name for the valley and The Mountain.

The Davidsons were racking up a record of firsts. As predicted it was a severe winter — snow came early and heavy. For four months the colonizers were completely isolated from everything — not even a hermit trapper nor a wandering band of Indians appeared out of the vast whiteness; however, at Christmas-time an adventuresome group from Provo breasted the snow and the mountains to spend part of the holidays with the pioneers.

The Wasatch winter held fast and by the first of April the pioneers began to have second thoughts. Winter-weary and anxious to get about further building, but with no sign of spring, they gathered at the home of Thomas Rasband to seek the help of the Lord. Humbly, earnestly and sincerely in prayer they let their needs be known. It is recorded "before the meeting was dismissed there was water dripping from the eaves of the house and spring was born in the valley".

Summer came, and in June 1860 there were more than 200 people living in the green lush valley. Most of the "North Field" was under the plow and a bounteous crop was expected. As was customary, a community building was erected — church, school, dance hall and theatre, all combined. The building was completed just in time to observe the 13th annual Pioneer Day celebration.

Since many of the colonizers were of British decent and had been converted to the Church by the mis-

sionary, Heber C. Kimball, it was only natural that their settlement was to become Heber City. President Kimball was invited to attend the new city and the observance of the ceremony.

He is reported to have said, "Now you people have named your little town after me, I want you to see to it that you are honest upright citizens and good Latter-Day Saints that I may not have cause to be ashamed of you".

As the community grew, so did community problems. It was soon evident fences were needed to contain the animals. Fencing required some judicial authority and thus came into being an unique political official, "the fence viewer".

Autumn harvests were good, however, the old mountain men's forecast of early frosts proved accurate. The 1860 harvest season brought an enterprising pair, Smith and Bullock, into the valley with the first thrashing machine, horse powered and inefficient. Slow but stable growth soon began to generate confidence and well-being. Choir and dramatics groups were formed. Our faithful chronicler, John Crook, was chosen as choir leader.

More romantic activities were also taking place - on Christmas Day, 1860, Thomas Rasband, by ecclesiastical and judicial authority, united Charles C. Thomas and Emmaline Sessions as man and wife. The first marriage to be performed in Heber City.

In the second ceremony, only a few hours after the first, Harvey Meeks claimed as his bride a Miss Dougal. They were married by Silas Smith at Center Creek.

In 1862, the first property valuation of the county was reported as \$48,350. In true frontier fashion, the independent spirits of the settlers did not readily accept the concept of property taxation. From the beginning, the burdens of the selectmen were many and varied.

In September of 1880 the Court House Committee reported to the selectmen that the construction costs to date were \$3,793.66. Upon completion two years later in 1882, the total costs were approximately \$4,600 plus \$250 for furniture.
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Funds were slow coming in — taxes were assessed but paid with little enthusiasm.

The tax collector's life, never an exceptionally happy nor popular one, is illustrated by his reluctant report and subsequent events recorded in the selectmen meeting minutes "...taxes collected \$147.18 — taxes past due \$327.23." The following session of the selectmen meeting minutes state simply and succinctly "...a new collector and assessor was appointed".

By 1864-1865 many of the crude cabins had been replaced with substantial masonry homes of the fine red sandstone so plentiful in the area. Many of these homes are standing, sturdy and strong after many decades of service. Many are yet occupied by progeny of the prominent families of that harsh and austere period when providing the next meal for the family was foremost in the mind of the provider.

The fact that the old names appear and reappear through the decades on the roster of "Provo Valley" is fair evidence of it being just a good place to live.

The Mountain, the sleeping maiden, the majestic Timpanogos may yet be viewed as Padres Escalante and Dominguez viewed it in 1776 — glistening in the early morning sun, magnificently impressive, bejeweled by the perpetual glacier, reflecting with solemn mystery the legend of two—plus centuries as eternally endless, timeless silence.

"Once again do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs, That on a wild, secluded scene impress thoughts of more deep seclusion, And connect the landscape with the quiet of the sky". (Wordsworth - "Tintern Abbey").

EAST MILL CREEK CHAPTER SONS OF UTAH PIONEERS

— D.P. Bartschi

Deadline for next issue
of the Pioneer
is December 15, 1980

FUND RAISING IN FULL SWING FOR NEW SUP BUILDING

Name to be inscribed in Plaque

Entered Valley or Born Prior to May 10, 1869

Date of Birth _____ Died _____

Where _____ Where _____

DONORS NAME _____ Current Address _____

Chapter Affiliation _____ At Large _____

Not presently a member of SUP _____

GOLDEN ROAD

(continued from page 11)

Hoytsville, and Coalville to the mouth of Echo Canyon. Up to 60,000 Mormon Pioneers plus additional thousands of soldiers, merchants, gold seekers, Californians, and assorted "Gentiles" came down Echo Canyon to the Weber River. Most turned north to present day Henefer and into the Valley via Emigration Canyon. But some, including almost every important visitor to Salt Lake City between 1862 and the coming of the railroad in 1869, turned south down The Golden Road to the City of the Saints. (See map accompanying this article.)

Since the new Headquarters are right on this old road, the S.U.P. might very well exploit properly and fully this fortuitous circumstance. For example, the trail could become an annual run sponsored by the new Pioneer Trail Relay Chapter, the road could be more thoroughly researched, marked, written up, and publicized, and part of the S.U.P. Library could be devoted to it. Old maps of the trail could be framed and displayed. On the grounds of the trail could be framed and displayed. On the grounds of Headquarters an appropriate marker or monument could be placed telling the story of this old trail.

The Golden Road was born of Parley P. Pratt's desire to find an easier way into the Valley. His search commenced in late June, 1848, but it was not until the 1850 emigrant season that it was at all ready for travel. Pratt hoped, in vain, to recoup his time and money by collecting tolls. An ad in the third issue of the *Deseret News* (June 29, 1850) recommended his GOLDEN PASS! or, NEW ROAD THROUGH THE MOUNTAINS and listed his tolls which ranged from "1 cent per head of sheep", to "75 cents per conveyance drawn by two animals."

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LARKIN MORTUARY

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SCOTTSDALE ARIZONA CHAPTER ON DECK

The Salt River Chapter, Phoenix, Arizona, is to sponsor the organization of a Scottsdale chapter, Sons of Utah Pioneers. The new organization will lead off with Stacy Garn as president, whose association with the Sons of Utah Pioneers dates back to the 1947 covered wagon automotive trek, from Nauvoo to Salt Lake, with President Spencer W. Kimball.

Stacy Garn has been recently released from the presidency of the Mesa Temple. His career has been in the insurance business as an executive. The organizers of this new chapter hope to start off with thirty members and go on from there. The Salt River Chapter meets every second Wednesday in Phoenix at the Royal Fork Restaurant.

Please send all news items
in care of the Editor
National Headquarters

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It is uncertain how extensively this route was used compared to the older trail through Emigration Canyon. I have recently read nearly 400 old pioneer journals and found but sixteen accounts of The Golden Road (and none of them referred to it by that name): three in 1850, three in 1861, three in 1862, three in 1863, and three in 1864. It appears that it fell into immediate disuse for over a decade after its first season. Three of these journals help explain why.

The earliest, by Mary Ann Maughan whose party negotiated this new road during August, 1850, recorded "We travelled the most dreadful road imaginable. Some places we had to make the road before we could pass. It is full of large rocks and stumps. Passed the toll gate and paid for passing over the road we had made...the road today has been the worst we ever saw." One month later Nelson W. Whipple recorded, "The road was almost impassable." Thereafter the road does not seem to have been improved much, for thirteen years later, during October, 1863, Elijah Larkin complained "The road was

dangerous on account of its being so narrow and very sloping in places."

There are several other reasons why the route declined: Pratt sold his interest to finance a mission to Chile, the new road was nine miles longer than the old, and tolls among fellow Mormons were unpopular, even resented.

Despite these problems, however, by 1862 The Golden Road was the preferred emigrant route into the Valley, especially after the Overland Stage began using it that year and it remained the main emigrant route to the coming of the railroad in 1869.

One of the best and earliest descriptions of this road is in the famous *Mormon Way-bill To The Gold Mines* (Salt Lake City, 1851). At the mouth of Echo Canyon, the guide explained, "The road forks, the left hand passes over two high mountains, the road is very rough." (Well emigrants were warned.)

(continued back page)

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PHOTOS — PIONEER MAGAZINE

- When submitting articles with photos, each chapter should include a remittance of:

\$5 for each Black & White glossy photo

\$10 for color prints (The Printer charges us extra to make a black & white print from color.)

Also include a self-addressed envelope with stamp in the event you want your photo returned.

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The route was described thus:
LEFT HAND ROAD

To the crossing of Weber (at Chalk Creek or Coalville) - 5 miles;

From the crossing of Weber River to Dry Hollow (Rockpoint) -10 miles;

From Dry Hollow to Silver Creek - 6 miles;

Thence through a well-watered country - 8 miles;

Thence to the head of the Great Canyon (Mt. Dell) - 6 miles;

Thence down the canyon -6 miles;

Thence to Gov. Young's grist mill (near 23rd East) - 2 miles;

Thence to the Great Salt Lake City - 5 miles;

Following this old trail today (with one exception) is easy. Take the blacktop south from the village of Echo, going east of the Echo Reservoir, to Coalville. Here, at Chalk Creek, the old trail crossed the Weber River. Modern travelers must cross about 2.5 miles farther south. The old trail continued beyond the present-day Wanship south to Rockport and turned west

up Three Mile Canyon to Silver Creek and the present-day Silver Creek Jct. Modern travelers are advised to follow Interstate 80 from Wanship up Silver Creek to this same Jct. From the Silver Creek Jct. Interstate and Hwy. 40 follow the Golden Road quite closely into the Valley.

This old trail has been commemorated by at least four markers, three of which are extant today. The first (from the east) is at Hoytsville, a DUP marker to the Pioneer Trail and Grist Mill of 1862. The second is just north of Wanship on the black-top. Here the DUP; marked the Wanship Stage Coach Station built in 1861. The third is 2.7 miles west of the Silver Creek Jct. where the old rock Overland Stage Station itself still stands in good condition. Here there is a Utah Highway Historical Marker. This station was built by William Kimball, eldest son of Heber C. Kimball and many important visitors to Utah, including Mark Twain and Horace Greeley, stayed there. At one time there was another Utah Highway Historical

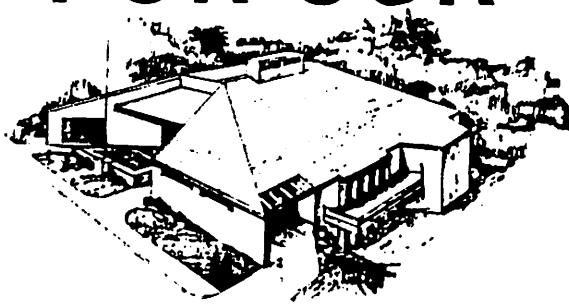
Marker at the mouth of Parley's Canyon, but it appears to have been removed when Interstate 80 was blasted through.

I suspect that henceforth on quiet evenings Sons may readily imagine Pioneer wagons and Overland stages rumbling down Parley's Hollow to the Crossroads of the West. Perhaps the SUP ought to acquire the hollow, possibly the only original bit of the Golden Road left and develop it historically and recreationally.

[Editor's note: Dr. Kimball, Professor of History at Southern Illinois University, is historian of the Mormon Pioneer Trail Foundation. He has written three books on Mormon trails and members of the SUP who are interested in following these old trails may wish to consult his Discovering Mormon Trails, Deseret Book, 1979, \$4.95]

¹Several non-Mormon accounts of this route are given in J. Roderic Korns, "The Golden Road," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 19 (1951), pp. 224-247.

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